

**SUBMISSION TO THE**  
**NUNAVUT WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT BOARD**  
**JUNE 2022**

**FOR**

**Information: X**

**Decision:**

**Issue:** Department of Fisheries and Oceans Canada – Fisheries Management Operational Updates

**Updates:**

**Marine Mammals:**

1) Narwhal

- The 2021/22 narwhal harvest season ended on March 31, 2022. Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) has contacted all Hunters and Trappers Organizations/Associations (HTOs/HTAs) and Government of Nunavut (GN) Wildlife Office staff requesting that 2021/22 narwhal tags be returned to DFO.
- It is very important that both the used and unused tags from 2021/22 along with the Narwhal HTO Harvest Sheet are returned to DFO as soon as possible. Carry-over allocations cannot be finalised until the harvest information from the previous season is returned and analysed by DFO.
- Narwhal tags and information packages for the 2022/23 harvest season are currently being prepared. DFO is working with the Nunavut Narwhal Working Group to finalize decisions on Baffin Bay narwhal allocations and season dates for 2022/23. Once allocation decisions are finalized, tags will be distributed to communities.

2) Walrus

- The Federal Minister of Fisheries and Oceans accepted the Nunavut Wildlife Management Board's (NWMB) decision to approve a total of 64 walrus sport hunts for 2022 (Arviat 4, Coral Harbour 35, Sanirajak 25).
- All 2022 walrus sport hunt outfitters have been notified of their successful applications. DFO will continue to work with outfitters over the next several months to ensure all necessary documentation is received prior to issuing licences and sample kits.
- A Nunavut Walrus Working Group meeting was held on April 5<sup>th</sup> to begin to review the NWMB Walrus Sport Hunt Interim Policy. DFO remains available to continue these important discussions with the Working Group.

- The Community Based Catch Monitoring program for walrus will continue in 2022.

### 3) Beluga

- The Cumberland Sound Beluga Working Group continues to meet virtually while COVID-19 impacts the ability to hold in-person meetings.
- In 2022, the Working Group met virtually in February and March. During these meetings the Working Group advanced their goals and objectives for Cumberland Sound Beluga management, discussed ongoing and future science programs in Pangnirtung, and considered projects to increase community engagement.
- The next Working Group meeting will occur via teleconference in May, with hopes to meet in-person this summer or fall.

### 4) Bowhead

- DFO has been advised of the host communities for the 2022 bowhead harvests in the Qikiataaluk Region (Iqaluit and Igloolik) and the Kitikmeot Region (Taloyoak), and is awaiting advisory on host communities for the Kivalliq Region.
- A Working Group meeting is to be planned to advance development of the draft Integrated Fisheries Management Plan (IFMP) for bowhead.
- Scheduling of engagements has been delayed owing to busy work schedules. Stakeholder engagement is an integral aspect of IFMP development in Nunavut and Nunavik, and advancement of the document will not occur without this input.
- DFO Science has submitted a separate briefing note for this Regular Meeting to provide an update on the bowhead mortalities discovered in 2020.

### 5) Harvest Reporting

- Staff from the Iqaluit DFO office recently contacted all HTOs/HTAs and GN Wildlife Office staff requesting final 2021/22 harvest updates for beluga, walrus, and narwhal. Reports of total marine mammal hunting mortality (landed and lost) are essential to develop reliable advice on sustainable harvests.
- DFO urges continued reporting of unusual marine mammal occurrences and events for follow up by co-management organizations, such as beached carcass and ice entrapments.
- Timely and accurate reporting is required under the Fisheries Act, Marine Mammal Regulations, and the Nunavut Agreement. It is strongly recommended that co-management organizations emphasize the importance of harvest reporting and monitoring.

### **Arctic Char**

- DFO is in the process of consolidating and finalizing 2021/22 harvest information for Arctic char fisheries across Nunavut in collaboration with fishers, fish plants, and country food stores.
- Interest in both commercial and emerging fisheries for Arctic char continues to be expressed in all three regions of Nunavut, and DFO works closely with co-managers such as fishers, HTOs, and Wildlife Office staff on licencing and collection of samples and data required for stock assessments.

### **Greenland Halibut (Turbot):**

- An on-ice turbot fishery in Cumberland Sound did not occur in 2022. The Pangnirtung fish plant decided not to purchase turbot due to a backlog of fish at the plant.
- The 500 tonne Total Allowable Harvest for this fishery remains available for fishing in the open-water season. DFO will continue to engage the Pangnirtung HTA and Pangnirtung fish plant regarding plans for a summer fishery in 2022.

### **U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act Import Provisions**

- The U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act (U.S. MMPA) Import Provisions will come into effect on January 1, 2023. DFO Arctic Region has submitted a total of eight (8) Comparability Finding (CF) Applications that are currently under review (see Table 1).
- Under the U.S. MMPA, fisheries are classified as Export or Exempt based on the likelihood that marine mammal bycatch will occur during the course of fishing operations.
- It was recently brought to the attention of DFO-Arctic that four (4) Arctic fisheries have been re-classified from Export to Exempt (see Table 1). This re-classification will be finalized when the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) publishes the official results of the CFs by November 30, 2022.
- Both Exempt and Export fisheries are required to apply for a CF. However, Export fisheries are also required to maintain a regulatory program to reduce marine mammal bycatch that is comparable to those in the U.S., where Exempt fisheries are not.
- At this time, there is no action required. Co-management partners and stakeholders will be provided updates on the status of our CF applications as they become available.

**Table 1: List of fisheries in the Arctic Region that have a submitted a Comparability Finding application.**

<b>Species</b>	<b>Fishery/Location</b>	<b>Gear Type(s)</b>	<b>Listing</b>
Arctic Char	Cambridge Bay	Fixed gear; Gillnet, Weir	Exempt
Arctic Char	Cumberland Sound	Fixed gear; Gillnet	Exempt
Arctic Char	Nunavut Settlement Area (NSA)	Fixed gear; Gillnet	Exempt
Shrimp	SMU 0, 1, EAZ, WAZ	Mobile gear; Otter Trawl	Exempt
Greenland Halibut	Cumberland Sound Turbot Management Area	Fixed gear; Longline	Export
Greenland Halibut	NAFO Subarea 0, 100 ton	Fixed gear; Longline	Export
Greenland Halibut	NAFO Subarea 0	Fixed gear; Longline, Gillnet	Export
Greenland Halibut	NAFO Subarea 0	Mobile gear; Trawl	Export

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**Date:** April 22, 2022